Christian Aid's Accountability Framework

Christian Aid's (CA) primary accountability is to our **Essential Purpose** – to expose the scandal of poverty, to help in practical ways to root it out from the world, and to challenge and change the systems that favour the rich and powerful over the poor and marginalised. We are an agency of our churches in Britain and Ireland and are mandated to work on relief, development and advocacy for poverty eradication. We work with and through partners overseas: churches, ecumenical bodies, local NGOs and movements who have common values and who we recognise to be in the best position to identify and deliver support and assistance to the communities that they work with.

Accountability is vital to upholding our Christian values and for maintaining our legitimacy and credibility to speak out so that it fully supports our *Essential Purpose*. We aim to hold ourselves openly responsible, in ways that involve our key stakeholders, for what we believe, what we do and say we will do – and for showing what we have done compared to what we said we would do. Doing this enables us to get feedback on what works and what doesn't, and what we need to improve. This increases the likelihood of success in our work with poor communities and enhances a sense of ownership among all our stakeholders. It also reduces the potential for inefficient use or misuse of the resources entrusted to us.

CA's Statement of Accountability outlines how CA strives to exercise accountability to all its stakeholders:

Poor and marginalised people and their communities	*Our supporters, including campaigners and volunteers*
Our partners	*Our sponsoring churches and board of trustees*
Our managers and staff	*Our allies*
Our institutional donors	*The wider public and those we challenge*
Our regulators	*Our suppliers and people who work in our supply chain*
The natural environment	

Being fully accountable to all stakeholders is not realistically practical, so we have identified four key stakeholders to whom we believe have a primary stake in achieving our *Essential Purpose* and whose means of 'holding us to account' are most in need of strengthening. Our four key stakeholder groups are: poor and marginalised people and their communities (primarily mediated through our partners), supporters including campaigners and volunteers, partner organisations and our sponsoring churches and our board of trustees.

CA has rich history and has built up a wealth of experience in capacity building through working in partnership with national organisations for over 60 years. We recognise that facilitation of the process of building knowledge and skills is one of our most important functions within our partnership and contributes greatly to improving the quality of projects implemented by our partners across the board. CA is committed to supporting partners to improve their own accountability to the communities they work with, noting that our accountability to communities and supporters hinges on our partners' ability to implement high quality work.

This Accountability Framework outlines what are commitments are to our key stakeholders, the relevant internal and external standards, codes, guidelines, principles and values we are committed to which ensure our accountability to our key stakeholder groups and enable us to increase the quality and effectiveness of all CA programmes (relief, development and advocacy). It outlines the current mechanisms (processes and procedures) that we have in place to meet our stated commitments as well as our goals and planned activities for continued improvement.

Currently Christian Aid is going through an internal review and planning process, in which commitments are being revised to align with, and strengthen our strategy Partnership for Change 2012+. Key commitments and improvements to our supporters, including

campaigners and volunteers and our sponsoring churches and our board of trustees will be updated in December 2012 once the departmental plans have been finalised.

Next revision: December 2012 /January 2013.

Commitment	What this commits CA to	Where are we now? Highlight gaps/good practice	Improvement	By When?	Who is responsible?	Current systems/resources
Poor and marginalised people and their communities						
Participation	<u>Partner</u> We recognise that our ability to ensure participation is largely dependent on that of our partners. To meet our commitment, we therefore expect that the partners that we chose to work with can develop and maintain the involvement of poor and marginalised women, girls, men and boys throughout the project cycle. CA will assess, monitor and evaluate the quality of community participation in partners' work and review partnership where commitment is not evident In our development and humanitarian work Christian Aid is committed to: 1) defining and documenting the process through which we will identify the people we work with by referring to age, gender, diversity and special needs 2) enabling women, girls, men and boys and other stakeholders to participate in different stages of the project including;	Guidelines for participation expectations have been produced and shared with country roll out offices CA adheres to international standards in humanitarian work* participation is key in the red cross code of conduct, sphere and HAP. CA uses these standards to guide practice in the field No systematic way for Christian Aid to store data on beneficiary age, gender and diversity PVCAs are conducted in some donor funded programmes; and there is guidance for integrating accountability into PVCAs	A system set up so we can monitor how practical and useful these guidelines are and how we can improve on them Guidelines for minimum expectations will be produced and shared with partners Pilot a system where data will collected and analysed in two roll out countries Documentation from proposals, monitoring visits will have a focus on participation Learning from this process will be documented and shared with management and staff to formalise accountability in the PVCA process	January 2013 August 2012 March 2013 March 2013 June 2012	London accountability team, country managers, REMs, HAP focal points London accountability team, country managers, REMs, HAP focal points London accountability team, country managers, REMs, HAP focal points London accountability team, country managers,	[Participation Guidelines](#) Partner Selection Criteria Partnership agreements International Operations Manual (IOM) – CA's internal manual for programme management Relevant monitoring forms from country offices [Accountability in PVCAs](#)

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	• Identifying what needs to change • Designing and implementing projects • Monitoring what is delivered • Assessing impact through doing this communities will be able to influence our decision making	Donor funded proposals have clauses which outline participation expectations		March 2013	REMs, HAP focal points PFD, London accountability team	HAP Handbook Programme management inductions PROMISE
Information sharing and communication	CA is committed to improving its performance and accountability through being open and transparent. We will make available on request information about: • our organisation, its vision/mission • Governance and management • Organisational policies • Strategies and plans • Finance and performance • Feedback/complaints mechanisms	Our HQ open information policy is on the website for public access; Updated information on accountability should be on CA website Roll out country offices will develop or already have their own contextualised information policies Roll out country offices have assessed their good practice and gaps in information sharing and have made plans to improve practice	Open information policy will be reviewed in consultation with staff. Open information policy is on the website and is monitored to see how many people access it ; update information on website All country roll out countries have their own open information policies with a monitoring plan to ensure that the right information is getting to the right people using the appropriate techniques	March 2013 June 2013 March 2013	Accountability team London; CIU; digital team Country managers, REMs, HAP focal points; London accountability team Country managers, REMs, HAP focal points; London accountability team	Open information policy Accountability statement Information Sharing Guidelines Good enough Guide HAP Handbook

Under review 2012

Commitment	What this commits CA to	Where are we now? Highlight gaps/good practice	Improvement	By When?	Who is responsible?	Current systems/resources
	<u>Partners</u> Christian Aid commits to encouraging its partners in making the information below available to the communities they work with: 1. its background and contact details; 2. its accountability framework, staff code of conduct and complaints procedure; 3. its goals and project objectives, expected results with the time frame, and a financial summary, as well as summaries of evaluations and progress reports; 4. staff roles and responsibilities; 5. criteria for selecting target groups and deliverables 6. how input from participation activities has contributed to decisions.	In roll out countries information sharing guidelines have been shared with partners.	A system is set up so we can monitor how practical and useful these guidelines are and how we can improve on them	June 2012	Accountability team London	
		Partners have been trained and are part of the accountability self-assessments	Information sharing questions are included in CA monitoring and evaluation	March 2013	Country managers, REMs, HAP focal points; London accountability team	
			Case studies are collected about effective methods of information sharing, and the impact this has on programmes	December 2012	London accountability team; PIL	
		CA uses the Good Enough Guide for basic information sharing	Guidelines for minimum expectations for humanitarian programmes will be produced and shared with partners and endorsed/monitored by humanitarian division managers	August 2012	London accountability team; country HAP focal points; REMs	

Under review 2012

Commitment	What this commits CA to	Where are we now? Highlight gaps/good practice	Improvement	By When?	Who is responsible?	Current systems/resources
Complaints	Christian Aid is committed to enabling project participants, target groups and end users to make a complaint when there is a problem with our work or a project that we are funding, and to know that it will be acted on. We will respond to the feedback and complaints made by communities and we make improvements and inform our stakeholders how we have done this We are committed to ensuring that our formal complaints mechanism works effectively and that complaints are handled through an accessible and safe process. Partners CA will encourage our partners and support them to establish their own complaints mechanisms to facilitate the handling of complaints from the communities that they work with.	HQ has an international complaints policy Roll out country offices are developing their own contextualised complaints policies. Roll out countries have been given guidelines on how to set up complaints mechanisms in communities	This policy will be reviewed and updated in consultation with country offices In all roll out countries a complaints policy and procedure will be in place. All complaints and responses will be recorded at country offices which will then feed into central system which will monitor complaints across all country offices. Records of complaints as evidence of mechanisms being used; six monthly reports will be sent to management so they can see common themes for improvement As part of the PPA pilot complaints mechanisms will be set up in 2 countries and those experiences will be documented and analysed. Country offices will monitor top line complaints from communities to partners, and encourage partners to improve their programmes based on feedback/complaints from communities Case studies collected about effective complaints mechanisms, and the impact this has on programme	April 2012 December 2012 To begin in January 2012 and then 6 monthly January 2013 March 2013 December 2012 January 2013	Accountability team London Country managers; REMs; country HAP focal points Country managers: SMT Accountability team London; REMS HAP focal points Accountability team London; REMS HAP focal points Accountability team London	Complaints policy Complaints trackers in country HAP Handbook

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Our Partners						
Participation	Christian Aid will consult partners at an early stage in key decision making processes including 5 year strategic planning, funding decisions and programme reviews. CA will share the resulting policy with the partner community and invite and respond to their comments.	CA ID staff and partners actively engage to develop country plans and programmes that are mutually agreed through consultative processes	Evidence will be collected to document the processes of partner consultations; gaps will also be identified and highlighted to management to make improvement plans	March 2013	Accountability team London; country managers; REMs; country HAP focal points	Partnership agreements, IOM PROMISE; CPSPs; CPPs; HAP self-assessments
Sharing information and communication	Christian Aid will provide its partners with sufficient information so that they can understand the purpose, achievements and challenges of Christian Aid and how to engage with the organisation. We will make available on request information about: • our organisation, its vision/mission • Governance and management • Organisational policies • Strategies and plans • Finance and performance • Feedback/complaints mechanisms We also commit to ensuring that our public policy/advocacy and campaign positions are robustly researched and well-founded in partner and beneficiary experience	Country roll out offices are developing open information policies	All roll out country offices will have a contextualised open information policy developed in consultation with partners and which will outline the best way to share information systematically in appropriate languages . Country offices will monitor how their information policy is used and what difference it makes to their relationship with partners Country offices have periodic reviews of their OIPs. The country open information policy is updated according to partners' feedback. Clearly defined Policy & Advocacy Research methods	December 2012 March 2013 Annual Ongoing	Country managers; country focal points; REMs Country managers; country focal points; REMs Country managers; country focal points; REMs Country managers; country focal points; REMs	Open Information Policy

Under review 2012

Commitment	What this commits CA to	Where are we now? Highlight gaps/good practice	Improvement	By When?	Who is responsible?	Current systems/resources
Shared goals, values and ways of working	Christian Aid will work with organisations who agree on shared goals, values and ways of working as out lined in the strategy 2012	ID staff and partners have a shared and common understanding of our goals, values and ways of working	The corporate performance plan and framework will measure the impact of our shared goals and ways of working.	December 2013	Senior management	Partnership for change; corporate performance plan
Complaints	Christian Aid is committed to enabling partners to make a complaint when there is a problem with our work or a project that we are funding, and to know that it will be acted on.	Please refer to complaints section for poor and marginalised people of this Accountability Framework	Please refer to complaints section for poor and marginalised people of this Accountability Framework		Please refer to complaints section for poor and marginalised people of this Accountability Framework	Complaints Policy